

ICPS newsletter[®]

Policy analysis groups—a new stage in developing Ukraine's civil service

Talk about problems in developing Ukraine's civil service has gone on for a long time. A bureaucratic system that does not match a democratic system of government leads to constant conflicts. Much time, skills and willingness on the part of all stakeholders interested in a positive solution are needed if Ukraine is to have qualified civil servants. Nor is this the first time ICPS is deeply involved in this issue. This time, ICPS has presented the results of the "Setting up Policy Analysis Groups (PAGs) in Central Executive Bodies" project. This is the first time the State Budget has funded a project setting up policy analysis groups in Ukraine

An international conference called "The Activity of Policy Analysis Groups under Ukrainian Government Bodies" took place on 6 October 2006, dedicated to the completion of the "Setting up Policy Analysis Groups in Central Executive Bodies" project raised a lot of interest. The implementing side, ICPS, the side that commissioned this project, the Center for Facilitating the Institutional Development of the Civil Service, and other stakeholders—civil servants, representatives of international organizations, the press and educators—involved in this conference expressed satisfaction with the results of the project.

Why do civil servants have to be retrained?

Ukraine's soviet heritage includes a bureaucratic machine that functions largely according to top-down, authoritarian rules in the context of a democratic system. For starters, Ukrainian civil servants, unlike their western counterparts, are poorly informed about public policy procedures.

Yet, it will be impossible to ensure democratic development without implementing a full public policy cycle in the process of developing and making policy. This is why Ukrainian bureaucrats urgently need to learn and apply public policy procedures: analyzing the specific issue, looking for alternative solutions, studying the positions of all stakeholders, consulting with all stakeholders, analyzing the impact of each possible decision, and transparently and publicly lobbying for the ultimate decision.

Vira Naniivska, President of the National Academy of Public Administration under

the President of Ukraine and the person responsible for the methodological management of this project, told conference participants that the country needs a bureaucrat who can show risks and analyze and forecast the further evolution of a situation and its possible consequences, both positive and negative.

First of all, civil servants need to be accountable. This was emphasized by Head of Operations of the Delegation of the European Commission to Ukraine and Belarus, Ms. Helene Chraye in her speech at this conference. According to Ms. Chraye, the notion of accountability must become the core of the civil service.

Having the status of a civil servant means that an individual is serving their city and their citizens. Civil servants are there to serve the country's citizens and they have to remember that at all times. They are paid with Budget funds, that is, with money coming from the country's citizens, the taxpayers who pay into the Budget. Thus, civil servants should work to understand the needs of the general public and respond accordingly.

Budget funds policy analysis groups

Implemented by the International Centre for Policy Studies and financed by the State Budget of Ukraine, this project was commissioned by the Center for Facilitating the Institutional Development of the Civil Service under the Main Administration of the Civil Service. It was the logical follow-up to a joint initiative by ICPS, the International Renaissance Foundation and the Open Society Institute implemented over 2000–2001 under an

Tender for regional organizations

The International Centre for Policy Studies and the Razumkov Center for Economic and Political Studies announce a tender for research into critical regional and local development issues.

Applications to participate in this tender must include:

- a description of the organization's capacity to carry out research related to regional or local policy analysis and to work with local governments, businesses and other community organizations based on its experience in previous projects (max. 1 page);
- identification of the critical regional or local development problem that will be the subject of research (max. 1 page);
- ways to apply the results of this study and to include them in the activities of local governments and other stakeholders (max. half-page);
- a list of representatives of local governments, businesses and other community organizations who are expected to be involved in conducting this research (max. 1 page);
- a list of previous or current projects implemented by the applying organization and resulting outputs.

The deadline for submitting applications to participate in this tender is 25 October 2006. Send your applications to:

Attn: Volodymyr Hnat
International Centre for Policy Studies
vul. Pymonenka 13A
Kyiv, 04050, Ukraine,
or e-mail them to vhnat@icps.kiev.ua.

Terms of reference and additional information can be found on the ICPS website at www.icps.com.ua/eng and on the Razumkov Center's website at www.uceps.org/eng/.

agreement on cooperation with the Cabinet of Ministers. Whereas five years ago this kind of project was financed through international technical assistance, the "Setting up Policy Analysis Groups in Central Executive Bodies" project was financed by the State Budget. This makes it clear that the Government considers public policy procedures an important priority.

The goal of this project was to boost the professional capacity of top civil servants to carry out policy analysis and implement democratic procedures when drafting and making Government policy. "Today, these are new skills for Ukrainian bureaucrats that are of vital importance to the Government to increase its political accountability. This is especially true in the context of political reform and a coalition Cabinet," said Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers Anatoliy Tolstoukhov in his opening speech at the conference.

Two stages: Theory and practice

As part of the first stage of this project, civil servants were familiarized with contemporary European philosophy of public administration and the culture of preparing and making decisions based on this philosophy. Part of the purpose is to ensure effective cooperation with their counterparts in EU countries in the future. Special attention was paid to the priorities written into the Ukraine–EU Plan of Action related to harmonizing national legislation with the EU legislation and enforcement.

During the second stage of the project, policy analysis groups prepared Green and White Papers on selected policy issues. In the process, they held a series of consultations with domestic and international experts and seminars where they discussed these Green and White Papers with stakeholders.

Hard to learn, easy to apply

The project to set up PAGs did face certain hurdles. To begin with, the process of selecting civil servants to participate in the PAGs under specific government bodies was overly slow. As a result, there were certain delays with fulfilling the objectives of the project as scheduled. Despite this lengthy selection process, somehow the PAGs included individuals who effectively withdrew from participation, which led to continuous changes until the middle of the project.

Some of the public debates on Green Papers showed that the current practice of holding public debates can be separated from the process of drafting and making policy. These public debates also revealed

that, in many instances, government bodies lack "a common philosophy and interpretation of the issues."

Individual civil servants were largely unfamiliar with the basic principles of public policy. They proved unable to organize a qualified dialog with the public regarding the specific area of activity of their government body or to comfortably present the best options developed by their office.

Project achievements

1. Better two-way communication.

According to the principles announced by Ukraine's Government, two key priorities are to enhance transparency and to establish dialog with the public. The Green and White Papers on government policy helped raise both the quality of this dialog with stakeholders and the quality of the eventual decisions. According to current procedures, public debates are based on a publicized draft piece of legislation, which is the last stage in the process of preparing it.

Green and White Papers make it possible to involve stakeholders in a dialog at the early stages of preparing a Government policy, that is, at the stage of identifying a problem, formulating and evaluating alternative solutions, and determining the best way to address this problem.

2. Including stakeholder interests.

Taking into account the interests of all stakeholders helps make the reform of government policy work. Analysis of the discussions of Green Papers with stakeholders revealed that this public policy instrument has no equal for resolving many recurrent issues in priority policy areas. All participants agreed that debates based on a Green Paper on government policy in a particular area and the inclusion of the positions of all stakeholders are the only way to develop a new balanced policy that meets EU requirements.

3. Readiness for Twinning programs.

Public debates on government policy increase the level of institutional capacity among central executive bodies to participate in Twinning programs. The process of preparing for and beginning to implement first Twinning projects showed that one of the main trouble spots in identifying the subjects, goals, and objectives of projects that match Ukraine's strategy towards European integration is the poor capacity of central executive bodies—the project beneficiaries—for strategic planning.

4. A defined position on government policy.

Policy analysis makes it possible for

ministries and departments to have and adhere to a clear position on policy issues when negotiating with the European Union.

In working with the EU, the Ukrainian side needs to have a clear position and defend its national interests. In the process of a political dialog within the Committee for Cooperation, Negotiations and Consultations, Ukraine's capacity to identify and defend its national interests is inferior because of the lack of policy analysis until now. Policy analysis makes it possible to have a clear view of the problem and to develop real alternatives for successfully resolving it.

5. A more integrated approach within the Government.

The preparation of policy papers makes it possible to develop an integrated approach to policy within the Government itself.

Green and White Papers also make it possible to deliver the view of specific problems and possible solutions to all departments and staff in the relevant central executive bodies and to provide a stimulus for organizing internal consultations.

Western countries, especially EU Member States, can offer Ukraine with examples and transfer best practice. However, the reform of the civil service must be implemented by Ukrainians themselves. Without any doubt, the experience acquired within the "Setting up Policy Analysis Groups in Central Executive Bodies" project is the best evidence that this project is worth extending to other central executive bodies to help Ukraine reform its system of public administration according to the best European models. ■

Implemented by the International Centre for Policy Studies and financed by the State Budget of Ukraine, project "Setting up Policy Analysis Groups in Central Executive Bodies" was commissioned by the Center for Facilitating the Institutional Development of the Civil Service under the Main Administration of the Civil Service.

Government bodies that participated in this pilot project included: the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Transport and Communication, the State Committee for Technical Regulation and Consumer Policy, the Anti-Monopoly Committee, the National Energy Regulatory Commission, the National Space Agency, the State Investment and Innovation Agency, the Presidential Secretariat, and the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers.

For additional information, please contact Project Manager Oleksandr Safin by telephone at (380-44) 484-4400 or via e-mail at osafin@icps.kiev.ua.

icps newsletter is a weekly publication of the International Centre for Policy Studies, delivered by electronic mail.

To be included in the distribution list, contact the ICPS publications department at marketing@icps.kiev.ua or call (380-44) 484-4400.

icps newsletter editor Olha Lvova (olvova@icps.kiev.ua). Phone: (380-44) 484-4400.

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